

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A method for detecting an object in an area, comprising:
capturing a reference image of the area without the object present, wherein the area includes an intentionally patterned background with both light areas and dark areas, wherein the light areas and dark areas have an intended interrelationship;
capturing a live image; and
determining if the object is present by comparing the reference image and the live image.

17. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the area is at least part of a larger area.

18. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 further comprising at least one other area that at least partially overlaps the area, and the method further includes the step of determining if the object is present in the at least one other area by comparing the reference image and the live image.

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 17 wherein the larger area at least partially encircles an area to be monitored.

20. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 17 wherein the larger area corresponds to an area to be monitored.

21. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the area corresponds to a monitored area.

22. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the area is a mask window.

23. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the patterned background includes an approximately equal amount of light areas and dark areas.

24. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the patterned background includes a number of parallel extending light areas and dark areas.

25. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the patterned background includes a checkerboard pattern of light areas and dark areas.

26. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the light areas and/or dark areas each have a size that is smaller than the object.

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the determining step comprises the steps of:

determining a difference image by determining a difference in intensity between corresponding locations of the reference image and the live image; and
determining if at least a portion of the difference image includes a complement or inverse image of the object.

28. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the determining step comprises the steps of:

determining a difference image by determining a difference in intensity between corresponding locations of the reference image and the live image; and
determining if the intensity of at least part of the difference image exceeds a threshold value.

29. (Previously Presented) A method for detecting an object in an area, comprising:
providing a patterned background in the area, wherein the patterned background includes both light areas and dark areas with an intended interrelationship;
capturing a reference image of the area without the object present;
capturing a live image of the area; and
determining if the object is present in the area by comparing the reference image and the live image.

30. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 29 wherein the area corresponds to an area of a floor, and the patterned background is fixed to the area of the floor.

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 30 wherein the patterned background is painted on the area of the floor.

32. (Previously Presented) An object detection system, comprising:
a patterned background fixed to an area, wherein the patterned background includes both light areas and dark areas with an intended interrelationship;
an image capture device for capturing a reference image of the area without the object present, and a live image of the area; and
a processing element for determining if the object is present in the area by comparing the reference image and the live image.

33. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 32 wherein the area is at least part of a larger area.

34. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 33 wherein the larger area at least partially encircles an area to be monitored.

35. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 33 wherein the larger area corresponds to an area to be monitored.

36. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 32 wherein the area corresponds to a monitored area.

37. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 32 wherein the patterned background includes an approximately equal amount of light areas and dark areas.

38. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 32 wherein the patterned background includes a number of parallel extending light areas and dark areas.

39. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 32 wherein the patterned background includes a checkerboard pattern of light areas and dark areas.

40. (Previously Presented) An object detection system according to claim 39 wherein the light areas and/or dark areas each have a size that is smaller than the object.